

Message Text

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SUBJECT: ALLIANCE PARTY PRESENTS PROPOSALS AS SOCIAL
DEMOCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY UNDERCUTS CRAIG

REF: BELFAST 309

1. ALLIANCE PARTY PRESENTED ITS FORMAL PROPOSAL FOR THE
FUTURE SHAPE OF NORTHERN IRELAND PARLIAMENT AND GOVERNMENT
TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION OCTOBER 2. ALLIANCE
PROPOSED UNICAMERAL PARLIAMENT ELECTED BY SINGLE TRANSFERABLE
VOTE WITH AN ADMINISTRATION FORMED BY CHAIRMEN OF DEPARTMENT
COMMITTEES IN PARLIAMENT. THESE CHAIRMEN TO BE ELECTED BY
PARLIAMENT PROPORTIONALLY TO STRENGTH OF DIFFERENT PARTIES.
CHAIRMEN COMMITTEES WOULD ELECT PRIME MINISTER WHO WOULD
CHAIR GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE. ALLIANCE PARTY CHAIRMAN
OLIVER NAPIER STRESSED THAT SYSTEM EMBODIED STRICT MAJORITY
RULE IN THAT COMMITTEE ABILITY TO PASS LEGISLATION WOULD BE
DEPENDENT ON MAJORITY IN PARLIAMENT. NAPIER ALSO DESCRIBED
PROPOSALS AS BASED ON CERTAIN UNDERLYING IDEAS: (A) MAJORITY
HAD RIGHT TO GOVERN AND (B) THERE WAS NEED TO INVOLVE
MINORITY ACTIVELY IN GOVERNMENT SO THAT SUPPORT AND LOYALTY
WOULD BE GIVEN TO INSTITUTIONS. NAPIER SAID HIS PARTY SAW
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NORTHERN IRELAND AS INTEGRAL PART OF UNITED KINGDOM AND,

WITH AGREED CONSTITUTION, ALLIANCE WOULD SUPPORT RETURN OF GOVERNOR, NORTHERN IRELAND PRIVY COUNCIL, AND INCREASED REPRESENTATION AT WESTMINSTER. HE EXPRESSED BELIEF COOPERATION WITH REPUBLIC COULD MOST EFFECTIVELY BE AGREED ON AD HOC BASIS BETWEEN GOVERNMENT MINISTERS AND CIVIL SERVANTS NORTH AND SOUTH RATHER THAN THROUGH INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS COUNCIL OF IRELAND. HE ALSO CALLED FOR REPEAL "ARROGANT" SECTIONS REPUBLIC CONSTITUTION THAT CLAIMED NORTHERN IRELAND.

2. OFFICIAL UNIONIST JOHN LAIRD CRITICIZED ALLIANCE PROPOSALS AS IMPRACTICABLE AND VAGUE. HE FOUND FAULT PRIMARILY THAT CABINET WOULD NOT HAVE RESPONSIBILITY. LAIRD STRESSED NECESSITY OF SYSTEM WHERE PARTIES WITH MANDATES COULD PUT THEIR IDEAS INTO PRACTICE BY NORMAL DEMOCRATIC PROCEDURES.

3. IVAN COOPER, SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY (SDLP) COMMENDED NAPIER PRESENTATION AS REASONABLE AND FAIR AND SAID THAT THERE AGREEMENT BETWEEN ALLIANCE AND SDLP IN MANY AREAS, IN PARTICULAR NECESSITY FOR PARTNERSHIP. COOPER THEN CAUSED MINOR SENSATION BY STATING THAT ANY SYSTEM OF COALITION WOULD HAVE TO BE "UNDER-PINNED BY COPPER FASTENED GUARANTEES." THIS, WHETHER, AGREED POSITION OF SDLP AS PARTY OR NOT, WILL UNDERCUT EFFORTS WILLIAM CRAIG TO RALLY SUPPORT FOR HIS FURTHER EXPLORATION OF POSSIBILITY VOLUNTARY COALITION. IT GENERALLY UNDERSTOOD THAT CRAIG'S DISCUSSIONS WITH SDLP CENTERED ON REACHING "GENTLEMENS AGREEMENT" THAT COALITION COULD BE FORMED IN PERIOD EMERGENCY. CONVENTION CHAIRMAN IS BELIEVED TO HAVE AGREED WITH CRAIG THAT SUCH AGREEMENT NEED NOT BE WRITTEN INTO CONSTITUTION. COOPER STATEMENT ALSO MODIFIES SDLP IMAGE OF INNOCENT INJURED PARTY IN BREAKDOWN OF INTER-PARTY TALKS. IF SDLP DEMAND FOR INSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION OF "POWER-SHARING" IS INFLEXIBLE THEN HARD-LINERS ON OTHER SIDE CAN REST COMFORTABLY WITH THEIR CASE FOR BRITISH STYLE MAJORITY RULE.

4. ALLIANCE PARTY PROPOSALS, IN THAT THEY INCLUDE BOTH A COMMITTEE SYSTEM AND PARTNERSHIP, COULD FORM BASIS FURTHER DISCUSSION TOWARD AGREED COMPROMISE IN THIS OR, MORE PROBABLY, IN SUBSEQUENT CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION. VIOLENT EVENTS LAST 24 HOURS (SEPTEL) DRAMATIZE ANEW NEED FOR SOME UNCLASSIFIED

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KIND OF FUNDAMENTAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN COMMUNITIES ON POLITICAL LEVEL.

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